

VZCZCXRO2445
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHAB #0615/01 1631138
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 121138Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3090
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABIDJAN 000615

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IV](#)
SUBJECT: OUAGA ACCORD AT 90 DAYS - ASSESSING ITS
IMPLEMENTATION

REF: A. ABIDJAN 580

[1](#)B. ABIDJAN 558

Classified By: EconChief EMassinga, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Since the signature of the Ouaga Accord on March 4, Cote d'Ivoire has seen both successes and shortcomings in its implementation. At the 90 day mark, several key tasks remain undone, while a number of others have been accomplished (even if incompletely). The overall report card is a C plus/B minus, with good marks for initial efforts, middling marks for some intermediate steps, and demerits for weak performance in disarmament of militias and tardiness in the DDR and identification processes. The outgoing UNSYG's High Representative for Elections is particularly skeptical about identification. Many observers sense a government somewhat adrift, without a PM firmly in charge and the President enjoying the discomfiture of his opponents. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Since the signature of the Ouaga Accord on March 4, there have been substantial advances, although simultaneously, significant delays mar progress and undermine the transition's credibility. Most decision-makers are taking advantage of this 90-day mark since the OPA's signature to offer their own assessments. The Presidency has issued its own (heavily slanted) matrix showing block after block of completed tasks, while the Prime Minister's key advisors tell us that the situation is far more advanced and on track than the daily background noise of the newspapers and media would have one believe (reftel A). Meanwhile, the departing High Representative for Elections Gerard Stoudmann remains pessimistic that the present transition period will be run effectively, and fears the Presidency will eviscerate the identification process, the cornerstone to the OPA's promise to end the conflict by decisively addressing the core problem: determination of who is an Ivorian.

[1](#)3. (C) In fact, the reality is more mixed. There has been some real progress in OPA implementation but also significant delays, particularly in such key, interlocking areas as the Audiences Foraines, standing up the Integrated Command and DDR. There has also been a palpable drift in governmental administration while the fundamental questions slowly grind forward. For example, the President has remained publicly silent about the continued presence of Posts Director General Zehi (who, despite a mid-May Supreme Court order that he vacate his post forthwith, continues to preside over a nearly-broken organization) and thuggish student union FESCI's latest outrages (reftel B), reinforcing a perception of stagnation. In addition, questions persist over the motivations of Prime Minister Soro, thought by many to have accepted payoffs to sign the accord.

=====
The Report Card

=====
¶4. (C) The overall grade for OPA implementation is a B minus/C plus.

¶5. (SBU) Initial moves were surprisingly swift. Forces Nouvelles SG Soro was appointed PM on March 29, 25 days after the OPA was signed, less than the five weeks provided by the OPA. Soro presented his new government on April 9, again meeting the deadline. The process of eliminating the Zone of Confidence began 10 days after the formation of the Soro government, as did the establishment of the Integrated Command Center (ICC), located at Yamoussoukro. Under the rubric of "establishing an institutional framework for implementation" (four weeks after the OPA signature), the Presidency issued an amnesty decree on April 12.

¶6. (SBU) Other actions in April and early June have continued provide momentum to the process. Disarmament of militias began on April 19 with the showy, ceremonial Disarmament of the Movement of the Resistance of the Greater West, and June 5 saw two decrees finally naming prefects and magistrates crucial to the redeployment of administration and justice in the North, both of which are essential for the upcoming audiences foraines, which will document the 2-4 million unregistered residents in Cote d'Ivoire.

¶7. (C) Each of these moves has been flawed. The gradual elimination of the Zone of Confidence has created security problems and in many cases has been more symbolic than substantive, as FANCI and FAFN checkpoints remain in place, slowing the movement of people and goods. The ICC is not truly functioning, and questions concerning the integration of the officer corps of the two armed forces bedevil efforts to fuse them. Many were outraged at the quick adoption of

ABIDJAN 00000615 002 OF 003

amnesty for crimes committed in the context of "politics" since August 2002. And the first post-OPA militia disarmament was widely recognized as a joke: militia leaders have apparently absconded with the money, while relatively few weapons were turned over for destruction and most of these were decrepit.

¶8. (C) However, last week's decrees naming magistrates and prefects represents a real breakthrough. The PM brokered a deal sidestepping the vexing question of how to pay for the over 200 audiences foraines-related magistrate positions created at the tail-end of the Banny government by appointing just over 60. And by naming a compromise slate of prefects and subprefects, PM Soro puts meat on the bones of his contention that the government is truly a co-equal cohabitation. According to a member of Soro's inner circle, a disagreement between the President and PM over bonuses for prefects and magistrates deploying to the North was apparently resolved in Soro's favor (no bonuses will be paid).

¶9. (C) Substantial holes remain, most glaringly DDR and identification. DDR was supposed to have begun through regroupment and stockage of weapons under the supervision of the impartial forces (no timeline was provided, but implicitly the process should have begun). To date, we have seen no action related to DDR. The government's head of the DDR coordination body was removed during the week of June 4, and he explained his dismissal as making room for the proper exercise of authority by the ICC; however, this (re)begs the question of when and how the ICC will really function. Delays in identification are perhaps even more serious. Scheduled by the OPA to begin 2 weeks after the formation of a new government, the audiences foraines are now slated to begin in mid-June. However, many observers believe that this cannot take place until the magistrates are all installed in their appointed places. Once started, identification will also undoubtedly last longer than the three months provided for in the OPA.

=====

The Perspective of the Outgoing HRE

=====

¶10. (C) UNSYG High Representative for Elections Stoudmann has been told by UN HQ in NY not to return to Abidjan, and his staff is quietly planning to depart by June 19. While the HRE believes the OPA has brought peace back to Cote d'Ivoire for the immediate future, the office's senior staff remains apprehensive. They see Soro as hopelessly bought, and uninterested in carrying forward a genuine identification process, potentially opening the door to a resumption of hostilities in the future. HRE senior staff continue to complain that Interior Minister Tagro (FPI stalwart) is gradually taking authority for developing the elections plan from the CIE, without resistance from the PM. Finally, HRE staff sees UN HQ as weak in the face of Gbagbo's pressure, too willing to accept the President's semi-public attacks on Stoudmann (of which the President virtually boasts in meetings with the Ambassador) and too willing to accept a weak certification mandate for ONUCI.

=====

How the Prime Minister's Men See It

=====

¶11. (C) Unsurprisingly, the PM and his senior men play up their role in bringing OPA to fruition. Recent discussions with both Tourism Minister and Forces Nouvelles #3 Sidiki Konate and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Alain Lobognon (reftel A) saw both men go to some lengths to underscore the government's adherence to OPA timelines and emphasize the power balance within the government. However, despite the positive step of issuing decrees on magistrates and prefects, the failure to move more quickly on identification and DDR, the FESCI fiasco (reftel B) and ceding overall control of the macroeconomics portfolio to the Gbagbo camp all underscore the difficulties Soro and Co. continue to face.

=====

Gbagbo, Smiling Like a Cheshire Cat

=====

¶12. (C) The President, meanwhile, remains serenely above the fray, taking pleasure in the discomfiture of his rivals. The President has managed to pit the unarmed opposition (RHDP) against the PM, as the former accuses the latter of weakness in the face of the President's efforts to undermine the international community's role in Cote d'Ivoire's transition. The argument has laid bare underlying fissures among the opposition and the FN, and has cost the President

ABIDJAN 00000615 003 OF 003

little to nothing. In the midst of the bickering amongst his rivals, the President has enjoyed seeing his protege Ble Goude take his "Caravan of Peace" to former FN stronghold Bouake, basked in the reflected glory of the national soccer team's triumph (in Bouake) in an African Cup qualifier and is preparing to receive OPA mediator Compaore in the first meeting of the Permanent Framework and Consultation Committee (made up of the President, PM, Ouattara and Bedie) today. All of these enhance the prestige of the Presidency as having delivered peace to Cote d'Ivoire.

Comment. The OPA is substantially different from the numerous previous accords which failed to bring an end to the crisis. This agreement, in contrast, was conceived by the principal actors themselves, who see value in being seen as adhering to it. While implementation is not perfect, there is more substance than its critics (including the HRE) would concede. At the same time, the main events, DDR and identification, are seriously behind schedule. For the OPA to be a real success, both processes will have to begin shortly and in earnest. End Comment.

